

Good evening,

Tonight the board voted to authorize a contract for land acquisition for ES-25 (elementary school), MS-10 (middle school), and HS-10 (high school). This land acquisition is the result of many months of talks, but I want to share with you a few things:

1. This contract is for the purpose of conducting studies on these properties - water and soil evaluations must be done. We plan to conduct these studies to make sure the groundwater supply is not being compromised in this area - and that the soils can support the schools. The study period is 120 days - and that time frame may be extended if necessary. As your elected representative, I vowed to look at greener construction when I campaigned. I intend to help continue the schools' track record of the last 15 years of being environmentally conscious. Furthermore, I intend to keep working farms from becoming school sites whenever possible. We have two willing sellers - Mr. Cangiano is selling 160 acres, more or less, (\$9,925,000) and Mr. Burgess is selling 10 acres (\$1,475,000).
2. The land is directly down Rt. 287. It is about 4.5 miles from Lovettsville. It is north of Rt. 9.
3. The following summarizes what I stated before the vote:

I see this decision as one of prudence - a study period will look at water and soils. We can walk away from this contract if the water supply and the soils cannot accommodate the schools. Due to the recent Western Loudoun secondary schools' climate, it is imperative that we keep this episode from happening again by planning for the future. No one has experienced a middle, intermediate, and high school situation like the students currently attending Blue Ridge Middle School, Harmony Intermediate School, and Loudoun Valley High School. Furthermore, no working farm has been taken for school sites, and no condemnation has occurred to build schools. I opposed the Grubb site - I spoke alongside members of the Wheatland Alliance against the site. Schools with Rt. 287 direct access are very differently positioned than those that would have been accessed down a country road to the Grubb site.

4. At long last, students North of Rt. 9 will not have to cross Rt. 9 - sit at the light for minutes - in order to go to school.
5. There are many points I would like to make, but this final one for tonight is key - this property acquisition allows time to be on the side of those close to the sites. There is a planned subdivision on the Legard Farm; the properties that will be under contract are currently subdivided; and discussions can take place to plan for the future. For example, people have voiced concern about light pollution in the past. If you visit Mountain View Elem., you can see the stars at night though the safety lights are on... the technology will only advance further between now and when the elementary school might be built - if the site can support it.

I encourage you to forward this email to your neighbors. In case you are wondering, meetings took place over the course of 2008, a community meeting was held in Lovettsville about schools in May, an RFP was issued for land North of Rt. 9 for future school sites, and the land acquisition process being vetted by the Joint Committee of the School Board and Board of Supervisors has been followed. It is imperative for you to ask questions - I will respond to them. I may not be able to answer them immediately, but I will get back to you. The meetings mentioned above only recognize my role as the Catoctin District School Board Representative - they do not acknowledge those that began with a petition over three years ago asking for community support for a school North of Rt. 9.

I will send out other emails pertaining to tonight's meeting in the coming days.

Best to you all,

Jennifer